The Detroit Institute of Arts. Detroit, MI.

The Detroit Institute of Art offers many different opportunities for the social studies classroom. The museum itself is located right here in Southeastern Michigan which makes an actual field trip possible. The museum runs special events throughout the year. Currently, the event is called Fakes, Forgeries, and Mysteries. This collection comes with several opportunities for cross curricular ties, something that could help guarantee a field trip. There are science tie ins as well as art and social studies links. The idea of the collection is interesting and should catch the attention of students at any age.

The standing collections at the DIA are fantastic. There are several collections, including American Art, European Art, the arts of Asia and the Islamic World, and more. Students can preview the collections online before going to the museum. Guided tours are available. If you are not taking a guided tour, I would limit students to one or two collections. In all honesty, there is so much to see at the DIA that I think students would be overwhelmed.

One of the best ideas I have heard for a field trip to the DIA is an artifact scavenger hunt. This would be a great activity to plan towards the end of a world history course as a review (and fun) activity. Students can sketch their own pictures of a painting they found most interesting and complete research on it and its’ artist when they return to school. Pictures can be taken, so students can be given digital cameras to take pictures of works of art around a same idea or topic, by a certain artist, or just ones that caught their eyes.

While the website is not as nice as the Met’s website, it does offer some opportunities for a virtual field trip if you are willing to do some digging to find what you need.